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경영학 석사 학위논문

**Price-Sensitive Subordinate, Price-  
Insensitive Boss: How Interpersonal  
Power Shapes Gift-Recipient's Feelings  
of Appreciation**

선물 주는 사람과 받는 사람 상호간의 힘의 차이가  
선물 받는 사람이 느끼는 감사함에 미치는 영향

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# Abstract

Gift-giving is one of the most common forms of exchange in people's daily lives. Extant previous researches have devoted considerable attention on understanding the asymmetric beliefs between gift-giver and gift-recipient and found that they have different perspectives on a gift's price, meanings, and features, etc. However, those studies presumed the giver-recipient relationship as equal and overlooked the power differences between gift-giver and gift-recipient. Since it is known that interpersonal power can affect people's behaviors, the current research proposes that the gift-recipient's feelings of appreciation would change depending on the relative power of gift-recipient. Based on Construal Level Theory, an empirical study demonstrated that the gift-recipient who has lower power than the gift-giver becomes more sensitive to gift value because they focus more on the secondary, subordinate, and goal-irrelevant features of gift (*concrete thinking*). However, the gift-recipient with higher power becomes less sensitive to gift value because they focus more on the primary, superordinate, and goal-relevant features (*abstract thinking*). The study also proposes perceived thoughtfulness and perceived generosity as the underlying mechanisms of the relationship between gift value and feelings of appreciation. Taken together, the research enriches our understanding of three different areas of research: gift-giving, construal level theory, and interpersonal power.

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**Keywords:** Gifts, Gift-giving, Gift evaluation, Feelings of Appreciation, Interpersonal Power, Construal Level Theory, Thoughtfulness, Generosity

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# 1. Introduction

In 2015, the total average spending per person on gifts (i.e., \$734.04) surpassed candy/food spending (i.e., \$118.82) by six times during holiday season (National Retail Federation 2015), which suggest that gifts count for much in people's holiday expenditure. Besides holiday season gift-giving, life time events such as birthday, graduation, and promotion party also offer us numerous opportunities to give and receive gifts. Although gift-givers always eager to give a well-received gifts, they often make suboptimal gift selections that does not fully satisfy the gift-recipients. This fact surprises us because people usually have extensive experience of giving and receiving gifts. They also spend considerable time finding the right one. However, it seems that the effort does not necessarily proportional to gift-recipients' satisfaction. Thus, understanding the mechanisms between gift-giver and gift-recipient is crucial to help people to make better decisions on gift-giving.

Prior research has identified many asymmetric beliefs between gift-giver and gift-recipient. Particularly, asymmetric perceptions about the price of gifts (Flynn and Adams 2009), requested gifts (Gino and Flynn 2011), preference on feasibility and desirability of gifts (Baskin et al. 2014), socially responsible gifts (Cavanaugh, Gino, and Fitzsimons 2015), and identity-congruency of gifts (Aknin and Human 2015; Paolacci, Straeter, and de Hooge 2015). These studies have one assumption in common that they all presumed the relationship between gift-giver and gift-recipient as equal and horizontal. However, is this true at all times?

In reality, we can easily witness unbalanced and unequal transactions between people (Dwyer 1984) and it is also common in gift-giving situations such as gift exchange between boss and his subordinates, parents and children, professor and student. Since power is known

to affects ones' values and behaviors in various ways (Rucker, Galinsky, and Dubois 2012), the asymmetric power between gift-giver and gift-recipient should also affect their perception on gifts. Ironically, little is known about the role of power differences in gift-giving. The current paper fills this gap by focusing on how the interpersonal power between gift-givers and gift-recipients affect their beliefs about gifts and their feelings of appreciation.

The objectives of this research paper are: (1) to examine the effect of gift value on gift-recipient's feelings of appreciation; (2) to investigate whether gift-recipients feel different level of appreciation about gifts when they have relatively higher or lower power than gift-givers; and (3) to discover underlying driving forces of gift-recipients to become price-sensitive when their relative power is lower than gift-givers.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1 Gift-Giving and Asymmetries between Gift-Giver and Gift-Recipient**

Gift-giving is commonly defined as “the process of selection, transfer, and evaluation of material (tangible) and immaterial (intangible) objects in fulfillment of an obligation or in a spontaneous manner” (Macklin and Walker 2015). Early studies on gift-giving had mainly focused on the reasons of gift-giving and the effect of gifts. For instance, people give gift to tighten social bonds and to impose identity (Joy 2001; Schwartz 1967), to build and keep order in a group (Gouldner 1960), and sometimes to express love and affection (Belk and Coon 1993). Moreover, gifts may involve social norm of giving (i.e., obligation) which force people to purchase gifts (Goodwin, Smith, and Spiggle 1990; Rugimbana et al. 2003; Wolfinbarger and Yale 1993).

Building on the work, recent studies focused on the role players in gift-giving: gift-giver and gift-recipient. A number of research studies revealed different perspectives on gifts between gift-giver and gift-recipient. Specifically, Gino and Flynn (2011) found that gift-recipients appreciate requested gifts more than unexpected gifts. Gift-givers, however, presume that both requested and unrequested gifts will be equally delighted. Also, Baskin et al. (2014) demonstrated that gift-recipients put more emphasis on feasibility attributes of the gifts, while gift-givers put more emphasis on desirability attributes of the gifts. This trade-off was explained by construal level theory. Additionally, Cavanaugh et al. (2015) proposed that gift-givers falsely predict the gratitude for socially responsible gifts when choosing for more distant others because they care more on the “symbolic meaning” of the gift. Moreover, several studies showed that gift-recipient appreciated more when gifts reflect the identity of



gift-giver. (Aknin and Human 2015; Paolacci et al. 2015).

Especially, Flynn and Adams (2009) proposed an asymmetric perception on gift price between gift-givers and -recipients. They argued that gift-givers assume that gift price and gift-recipients' feelings of appreciation are positively related because they believed expensive gifts would bring a higher level of thoughtfulness. On the other hand, gift-recipients did not showed differences in their gratitude about expensive and inexpensive gifts. Thus, the author concluded, as the research title 'Money can't buy love' states, that the price of gifts has limited effects on gift-recipients' appreciation.

Despite the varied effects caused by different roles in gift exchange have been revealed, majority of past research presumed giver-recipient relationship as equal and horizontal. Also, limited studies dealt the different characteristics of gift-givers and gift-recipients. However, in reality, people not only consider *what* they received but also *who* gave it to them when evaluating a gift. Especially, the relationship with gift-giver is often became an important criterion for gift-recipient in the evaluation process. Therefore, this gap needs to be filled in order to have better understanding of the effect of asymmetry between gift-givers and gift-recipients. Particularly, current research focuses on the power difference between the two parties in gift-giving.

## **2.2 Interpersonal Power and Decision Making**

Power has traditionally been defined as “fundamental and asymmetric control over valued resources in social relationships” (Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson 2003; Magee and Galinsky 2008). However, Sturm and Antonakis (2015) pointed out this definition of power as problematic since “sine qua non of power is not about one party controlling valued

resources over another in a social relationship.” Instead, the process of power are much more pervasive and complex (French, Raven, and Cartwright 1959), and are not bounded to intentional acts of the more powerful person (Sturm and Antonakis 2015). For example, the mere presence of power holder could create change in individuals to follow the power holder’s desire. Thus, they propose a comprehensive definition of power based on its three characteristics (i.e., discretion, means, and enforcement). Accordingly, current study defines power as “having the discretion and the means to asymmetrically enforce one’s will over others” (Sturm and Antonakis 2015).

Early literature on power focused on the influence of power on people’s cognition. A number of scholars found that people who have power and dominance focus selectively on stereotypic information rather than counter-stereotypic information (Fiske 1993; Fiske and Dépret 1996; Goodwin et al. 2000; Goodwin, Operario, and Fiske 1998). Also, most power holder lacked awareness about others’ perspectives and attitudes (Ebenbach and Keltner 1998; Galinsky et al. 2006; Keltner and Robinson 1997). For instance, Galinsky et al. (2006) made participants to write the letter “E” on their forehead. Interestingly, high power primed individuals wrote the letter in the right direction for themselves but not for everyone else. Moreover, Lammers and Stapel (2009) found that power can also affect moral thinking. Concretely, high power increased the reliance on rule-based (deontological) moral thinking, while low power increased the use of outcome-based (consequentialist) moral thinking. Accordingly, the change of cognition should also affect people’s decisions and interpretations since people act based on the information they acquired in advance.

For a long time, however, power which is an interpersonal construct has been considered separately with choices and decisions which are widely known as intrapersonal constructs, but now the view has changed since “consumer decisions are often made in the

context of established relationships” (Inesi et al. 2011; Simpson, Griskevicius, and Rothman 2012). Indeed, individuals (e.g., givers and receivers) are separated into powerful versus non-powerful roles on most social interaction (Rucker and Galinsky 2008). For example, supervisors have power over employees, parents have power over their children, and teachers have power over students. This aspects would surely correspond with gift-giving context since there are two segmented role players in gift-giving: gift-giver and gift-recipient.

## **2.3 Construal Level Theory and Abstract Thinking**

Construal Level Theory (Trope and Liberman 2003) propose that information can be interpreted at different level (i.e., high-level or low-level), according to its psychological distance (e.g., temporal distance). The greater the distance, the more likely the information will be construed in terms of a few abstract characteristics that contain critical aspects of given information. These features include primary, superordinate, goal-relevant, and decontextualized features. On the contrary, the smaller the distance, the more likely the information to be construed in terms of more concrete ways that holds secondary, subordinate, goal-irrelevant, and contextualized features of the information. For example, Liberman and Trope (1998) found that most students preferred the activity high in desirability but low in feasibility (e.g., an attractive guest lecture with inconvenient time to attend) when the event was thought to be in distant future rather than near future, while they favored activity high in feasibility but low in desirability (e.g., lecture at convenient time to attend with a boring guest) when it was believed to occur near future than distant future.

Additionally, prior research found much evidence that power can affect people’s psychological distance. Specifically, power increases social distance toward others because

people with power feel more self-sufficient (Lammers et al. 2012) and feel greater independence from others (Smith and Trope 2006). Correspondingly, it was found that power can create a subjective sense of separation and distinctiveness from others (Lee and Tiedens 2001). Besides, the social identity theory of leadership proposed that a leader of group become mentally isolated as time goes on (Hogg and Reid 2001).

Taken both ideas of CLT and power together, Smith and Trope (2006) proposed that the increased psychological distance of powerholders would cause them to draw more abstract construal of given information. For instance, the authors showed that high-power primed individuals compared to low-power primed individuals, were more likely to classify events to high level of abstraction. Similarly, Rucker et al. (2012) argued that an agency focus which is common to powerholder is likely to develop greater psychological distance causing abstract thinking. Therefore, these aspects could be applicable to gift-giving context because the types of relationship between gift-givers and gift-recipients would create power difference between them. That is, the relative power of gift-recipients may foster or suppress their abstract thinking when evaluating their gifts.

## 3. The Current Research

### 3.1 Hypotheses

Current study defines gift value as “the dollar value of a gift” (Beltramini 2000). Every gift has certain level of values that affects recipient’s gift evaluation. Undoubtedly, monetary cost of a gift can increase its value. However, prior literature in this area has contrast findings about its effect. Some researchers indicate that people often count on price value as a quality cue even they were given additional feature information (Kardes et al. 2004) and the perceived quality can positively affect people’s satisfaction (Gotlieb, Grewal, and Brown 1994; Olsen 2002). Conversely, sometimes the correlation between price value and quality can be reduced or even nullified when people consider other attribute information (Jacoby, Olson, and Haddock 1971; Szybillo and Jacoby 1974). Moreover, Flynn and Adams (2009) revealed that gift-givers expect gift of higher value would appreciate gift-recipients but gift-recipients had no such correlation between price of the gift and their level of gratitude.

All things considered, I predicted that the amount of gift value may positively affects gift-recipients’ gratitude because, generally, gift of higher value are assessed more positively (Larsen and Watson 2001). Thus, the gifts of higher value compare to lower value would enhance the feelings of appreciation of gift-recipients. Formally,

**Hypothesis 1:** Gift-recipient appreciate gifts of higher value more than gifts of lower value.

Next, power difference between gift-giver and gift-recipient also need to be considered in gift-giving context since the relationship between them has strong influence on

gift-recipient's interpretation of gifts (Belk and Coon 1993; Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim 1993; Sherry 1983). On the basis of construal level theory (Trope and Liberman 2003), gifts should also be construed to either high- or low-level construal. High-level construal is abstract thinking that focuses on simple, decontextualized, primary, superordinate, and goal relevant information. Even though there could be various meanings and motivations of gift, the primary and goal relevant meaning of gift is celebration. Thus, high-level construal of gift would lead gift-recipients to general understanding of gift as congratulation. Contrarily, low-level construal is concrete thinking that cares more about complex, contextualized, secondary, subordinate, and goal irrelevant information. Thus, low-level construal of gift would lead gift-recipients to pay more attention on subordinate and specific details of gift such as price value (Yan and Sengupta 2011). Moreover, price is also known to be a feasibility concern that is predominant under low-level construal (Yan and Sengupta 2011).

In general, the psychological distance between a gift-recipient and a gift is relatively close because gift-recipient is the one who owns and uses the gift. Thus, the short psychological distance would ordinarily lead gift-recipient to interpret the gift more concretely. However, the psychological distance could increase when their power is elevated (Smith and Trope 2006). Thus, in the case, it will cause them to interpret gift in more abstract ways (Rucker et al. 2012). Inversely, if the gift-recipients' power diminishes, it will make them to evaluate the gift even more concretely.

Therefore, I predict that gift-recipients with higher power than gift-givers would be less sensitive to gift value because they are more likely to use abstract information processing and they will care more about its primary goal (e.g., celebration). On the other hand, gift-recipients with lower power than gift-givers would be more sensitive to gift value since it would make them to use concrete information processing and they will focus on its

subordinate attribute (e.g., price). Formally,

**Hypothesis 2:** The effect of gift value on feelings of appreciation is more pronounced when gift-recipient's power is relatively lower than the gift-giver's power.

### **3.2 Thoughtfulness and Generosity on Feelings of Appreciation**

A number of studies in gift-giving have measured thoughtfulness to find an underlying mechanism of gift-giving. However, perceived thoughtfulness about a gift varied depending on the gift types, roles, and its exchange contexts. For example, Flynn and Adams (2009) revealed that gift-givers believe the amount they spend on a gift would have positive correlation with gift-recipients' appreciation because they assume pricey gifts convey a higher amount of thoughtfulness. Also, Gino and Flynn (2011) found that gift-givers predict both requested and unrequested gift would be equally appreciable and considered thoughtful to gift-recipients. However, most gift-recipients reported higher level of appreciation and perceived thoughtfulness about the requested gift.

Thus, the perceived thoughtfulness of gift-recipients need to be considered in the model to find why they feel higher appreciation about gifts of higher value. I predict that gift-recipients will feel higher level of appreciation about high value gift than low value gift because they think it is more thoughtful gift. Formally,

**Hypothesis 3:** Gift-recipients appreciate the high value gift more than low value gift because they perceive higher thoughtfulness.

Adapted from Koo and Fishbach (2016), perceived generosity can be defined as a perception of a person as good, kind, altruistic, and intrinsically motivated. Although we normally feel thankful about what others have done for us, people does not always construe all favors as generous behaviors. For example, reciprocity may be reduced if “a gift-recipient has reason to believe that the gift was given with the intention” other than altruism (Tesser, Gatewood, and Driver 1968). Similarly, Berman et al. (2015) argue that a prosocial behavior could convey a sense of generosity but it could also reminds a selfish motivation. Specifically, bragging increases perceptions of altruism when prosocial behavior is unknown since it leads people to believe that an actor has behave generously. However, bragging reduces perceptions of altruism when the behavior is known in advance, because it signals selfish motive (e.g., reputational benefits). Also, Wolfinbarger and Yale (1993) proposed that people sometimes obligatorily give gift because they are “motivated by compliance with the social norm of giving.” In the case, gift-recipients might not fully satisfied with the gift because it was not a generous behavior. Thus, gifts that are not perceived as altruism may decrease the perceived generosity of the gift-recipients.

Therefore, the perceived generosity of gift-recipients also need to be considered in the model to find why they feel greater appreciation about higher value. I predicted that gift-recipients will feel higher level of appreciation about higher value gift than lower value gift because they think it is more generous gift. Formally,

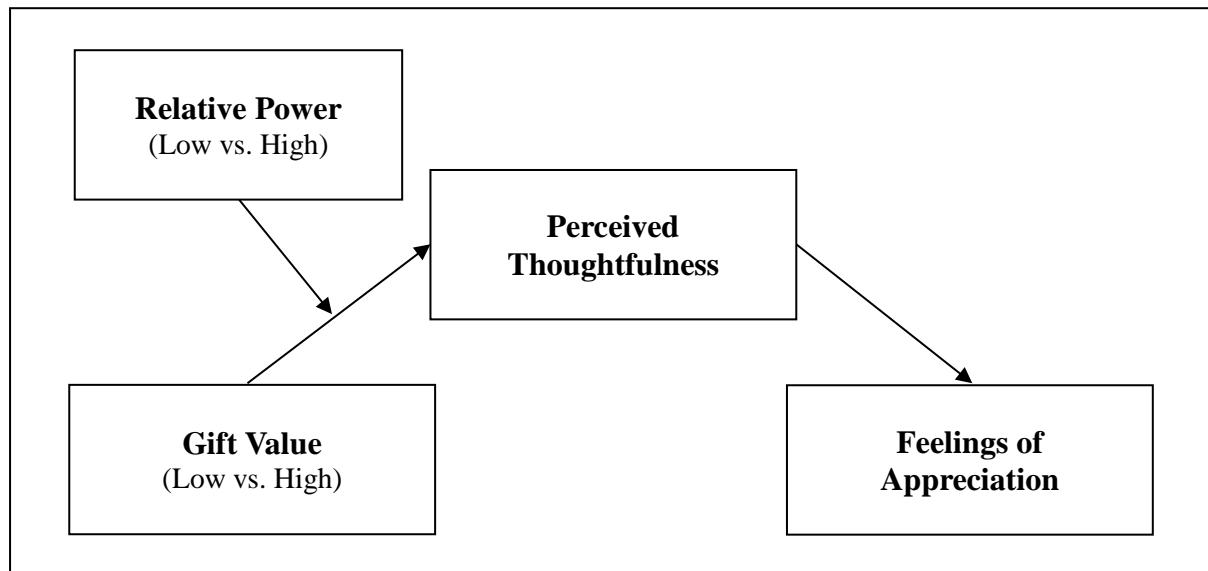
**Hypothesis 4:** Gift-recipients appreciate the high value gift more than low value gift because they perceive higher generosity.

To be specific, the difference of gift values will stimulate individuals to perceive the thoughtfulness and generosity of the gift in different degrees. Consequently, affecting the

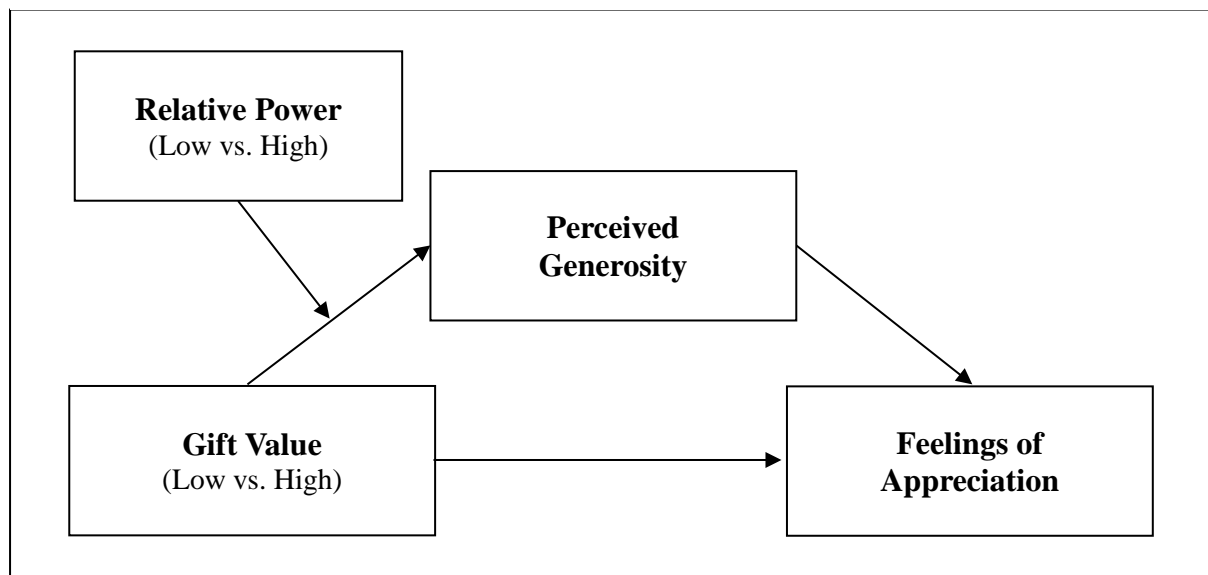


level of appreciation they feel. Also, the variations of thoughtfulness and generosity will change depending on the relative power those individuals have (see Fig. 1).

**Figure 1a. The Conceptual Model (Thoughtfulness)**



**Figure 1b. The Conceptual Model (Generosity)**



## 4. Empirical Study

### 4.1 Method

#### 4.1.1 Participants and Design

200 participants were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (M-Turk) for a small amount of incentives. 176 participants (35% females and 65% males; ages 20-71 years,  $M_{age}=35.7$ ,  $SD_{age}=10.6$ ) remained after removing those who did not complete the study and failed some attention checks. The study employed 2 (relative power: low vs. high) x 2 (gift value: low vs. high) between-subject design.

#### 4.1.2 Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Across the condition, they were asked to read a scenario about receiving a birthday gift and then answer a few questions about the event. The scenario was revised based on the condition to which they had been assigned. A photograph of people working in an office was displayed above the scenario in order to make it more realistic (see Appendix 1). I manipulated the relative power by putting participants in the scenario to either a boss or a subordinate (see Galinsky, Gruenfeld, and Magee 2003, for a conceptually similar manipulation). Amazon gift card was selected as gift in the study since gift cards ranked the Most Wanted Gifts by both genders in 2015 (National Retail Federation). Its value was manipulated by different gift prices (\$5 vs. \$50).

First, participants were instructed to read the following scenario and to imagine how

they would respond:

“You have been working in a company for 6 years and have become fairly well acquainted with your coworkers. You wake up one morning and realize that today is your birthday. When you arrive at work, your boss [subordinate] comes up to you and gives you a gift with friendly congratulations. When you unwrap it, you discover a \$5 [\$50] Amazon gift card.”

After reading the scenario, participants saw an image of Amazon gift card (\$5 or \$50) and answered a numbers of questions. The questions included items measuring perceived generosity, perceived thoughtfulness, and feelings of appreciation (in that order). Lastly, participants answered some attention checks asking them whether they remembered some of the details they read about in the scenario and they responded demographic measures (gender, age, and ethnicity).

### **4.1.3 Measures**

*Feelings of appreciation.* I adopted five items from Flynn and Adams (2009) and used these to measure the participants’ feelings of appreciation: “To what extent would you appreciate this gift?”, “To what extent would you feel grateful for this gift?”, “To what extent would you feel thankful for this gift?”, “To what extent would you enjoy receiving this gift?” and “To what extent would you feel pleased about receiving this gift?” To provide their responses, participants were instructed to use a scale ranging from 1=“Not at all” to 7=“To a great extent.” The five appreciation items were averaged into one composite variable.

*Perceived generosity.* Three items were adopted from Koo and Fishbach (2016) and the questions were rephrased to suit recipients’ role. These items were used to assess

participants' perceived generosity about gift-givers: "I would consider him [her] as generous," "I would consider him [her] as a good and kind person," and "I would consider him [her] as a charitable person." Respondents provided their ratings for each question using a 7-point scale ranging from 1="Not at all" to 7="Very much." The three items were averaged together to create one composite variable of perceived generosity.

*Perceived Thoughtfulness.* Two questions were adopted from Flynn and Adams (2009) to measure participants' perceived thoughtfulness: "This would be a thoughtful gift," "This would be a considerate gift". Participants were asked to respond to these items using a 7-point scale ranging from 1="Not at all" to 7="To a great extent". The two items were averaged into one composite variable of perceived thoughtfulness.

## **4.2 Results**

### **4.2.1 Gift Value and Feelings of appreciation**

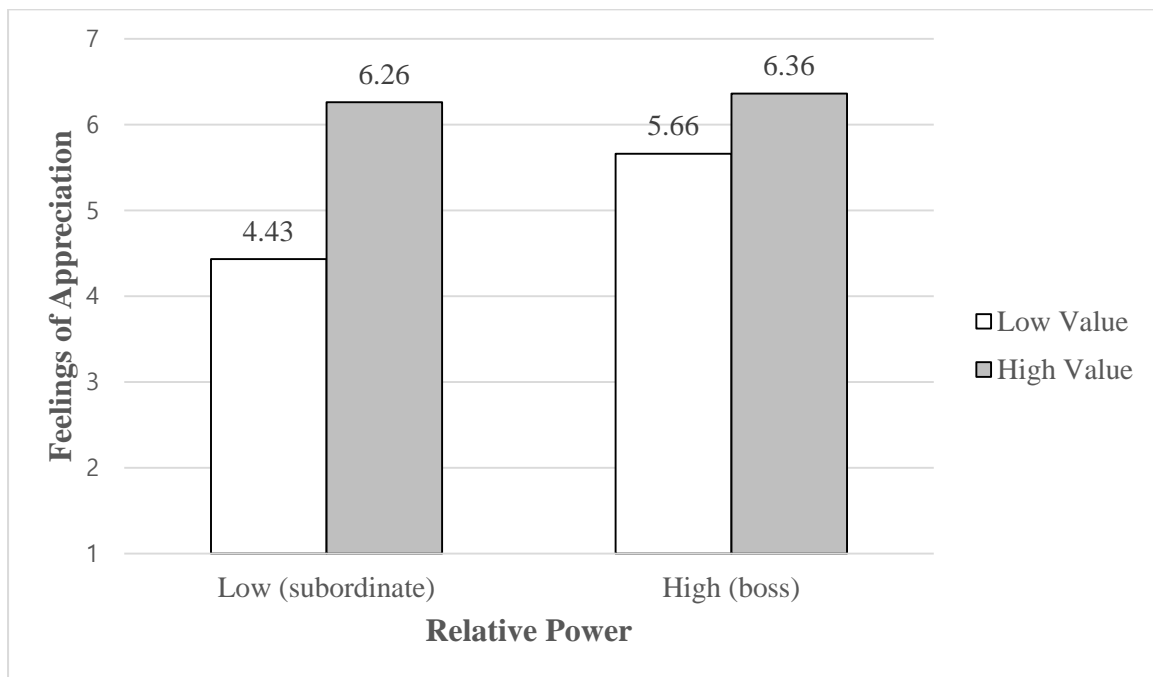
An ANOVA with feelings of appreciation as the dependent measure elicited a main effect of gift value,  $F(1, 174) = 39.09, p < .001$ . Participants in the high- versus low-value gift condition reported that they would have greater feelings of appreciation ( $M_{low\ value} = 5.08, SD_{low\ value} = 1.57$  vs.  $M_{high\ value} = 6.31, SD_{high\ value} = 0.96$ ), supporting H1.

### **4.2.2 Gift Value, Power, and Appreciation**

An ANOVA with feelings of appreciation as the dependent measure and the interaction term of gift value \* relative power as the independent measures revealed a

significant interaction effect,  $F(1, 172) = 9.18, p < .01$  (see Fig. 2 and Table 1). The interaction effect indicates that participants with relatively low power (i.e., subordinate) thought the \$50 gift card would be appreciated more than the \$5 gift card ( $M_{low\ value} = 4.43$  vs.  $M_{high\ value} = 6.26, F(1, 81) = 35.43, p < .001$ ). On the other hand, participants with relatively higher power (i.e., boss) also thought the \$50 gift card would be appreciated more than the \$5 gift card ( $M_{low\ value} = 5.66$  vs.  $M_{high\ value} = 6.36, F(1, 91) = 10.17, p < .01$ ). However, the difference between \$50 and \$5 gift card is more prominent in the case of subordinate rather than boss.

**Figure 2. The Effect of Interaction between Gift Value and Relative Power on Feelings of Appreciation**



Planned contrasts further revealed that subordinate who received \$5 gift card showed lower feelings of appreciation ( $M_{low\ power*low\ value} = 4.43, SD = 1.65$ ) than boss who

received the \$5 gift card ( $M_{high\ power*low\ value} = 5.66, SD = 1.25; t(175) = -3.88, p < .001$ ).

On the other hand, relative power did not reveal any significant difference for \$50 gift card

( $M_{low\ power*high\ value} = 6.26, SD = 1.10; M_{high\ power*high\ value} = 6.36, SD = 0.81; t(175)$

$= -0.48, p > .635$ ). Lastly, boss showed lower feelings of appreciation about \$5 gift card

( $M_{high\ power*low\ value} = 5.66, SD = 1.25$ ) than \$50 gift card ( $M_{high\ power*high\ value} = 6.36,$

$SD = 0.81; t(175) = -3.20, p < .01$ ).

Taken together, these results indicate that relative power of gift-recipient has a significant interplaying role on recipient's feelings of appreciation when gift-recipient's power is relatively lower than gift-giver, supporting H2.

**Table 1. Interaction Effect between Gift Value and Relative Power**

A. Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Feelings of Appreciation

Gift Value	Relative Power	Mean (SD)	Sample
Low value	Low power	4.43 (1.65)	41
	High power	5.66 (1.25)	47
	Total	5.08 (1.57)	88
High value	Low power	6.26 (1.10)	42
	High power	6.36 (0.81)	46
	Total	6.31 (0.96)	88
Total	Low power	5.35 (1.67)	83
	High power	6.00 (1.11)	93
	Total	5.69 (1.43)	176

B. Two-way ANOVA – Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Feelings of Appreciation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model(a)	99.161 <sup>a</sup>	3	33.054	21.803	.000
Intercept	5648.280	1	5648.280	3725.708	.000
Gift Value	70.122	1	70.122	46.254	.000
Relative Power	19.259	1	19.259	12.704	.000
Value * Power	13.916	1	13.916	9.179	.003
Error	260.757	172	1.516		
Total	6071.320	176			
Corrected Total	359.918	175			

a. R Squared = .276 (Adjusted R Squared = .263)

### 4.2.3 Gift Value, Thoughtfulness, and Appreciation

Mediation test was conducted to find out the first underlying mechanism of the main effect using a set of regression analyses (Baron and Kenny 1986). I predicted that gift-recipient would perceived greater thoughtfulness when they are given high value gift without power differences. First, in model 1, I regressed feelings of appreciation as a dependent variable on the gift-value. The main effect of gift-value on feelings of appreciation was statistically significant ( $B = 1.225$ ,  $t(175) = 6.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Second, in model 2, I regressed the mediator on gift-value, and the path revealed that the effect of gift-value was significant ( $B = 1.506$ ,  $t(175) = 6.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Third, in model 3, I regressed feelings of appreciation as a dependent variable on the gift-value as an independent variable and perceived thoughtfulness as a mediator. In this model, the effect of independent variable was insignificant, with the size of the effect became smaller ( $B = 0.227$ ,  $t(175) = 1.81$ ,  $p = .072$ ). The effect of perceived thoughtfulness was significant ( $B = 0.663$ ,  $t(175) = 18.61$ ,  $p < .001$ ), concluding that perceived thoughtfulness was fully mediating the main effect. This supports H3 that gift-recipients appreciate the high value gift more than low value gift because they perceive higher thoughtfulness.

I also applied the bootstrapping method (Hayes 2013; 5000 Bootstrapped samples; PROCESS SPSS Macro; Model 4) to access mediation. The direct effect of gift-value on feelings of appreciation revealed that the 95% confidence interval included zero ( $B = 0.227$ , 95% biased corrected CI [-.030 to .484],  $p = .083$ ), and the indirect effect of gift-value on feelings of appreciation through perceived thoughtfulness did not include zero ( $B = .998$ , 95% bias corrected CI [.662 to 1.373], excluded zero). Thus, I conclude that the perceived thoughtfulness fully mediated the main effect of gift-value on feelings of appreciation.



#### 4.2.4 Gift Value, Generosity, and Appreciation

Mediation test was conducted to find out the second underlying mechanism of the main effect using a set of regression analyses (Baron and Kenny 1986). I predicted that gift-recipient would perceived greater generosity when they are given high value gift without power differences. First, in model 1, I regressed feelings of appreciation as a dependent variable on the gift-value. The main effect of gift-value on feelings of appreciation was statistically significant ( $B = 1.225$ ,  $t(175) = 6.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Second, in model 2, I regressed the mediator on gift-value, and the path revealed that the effect of gift-value was significant ( $B = 1.485$ ,  $t(175) = 7.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Third, in model 3, I regressed feelings of appreciation as a dependent variable on the gift-value as an independent variable and perceived generosity as a mediator. In this model, the effect of independent variable was insignificant, with the size of the effect became smaller ( $B = -.026$ ,  $t(175) = -.203$ ,  $p = .839$ ). The effect of perceived generosity was significant ( $B = 0.842$ ,  $t(175) = 19.63$ ,  $p < .001$ ), concluding that perceived generosity was fully mediating the main effect. This supports H4 that gift-recipients appreciate the high value gift more than low value gift because they perceive higher generosity.

I also applied the bootstrapping method (Hayes 2013; 5000 Bootstrapped samples; PROCESS SPSS Macro; Model 4) to access mediation. The direct effect of gift-value on feelings of appreciation revealed that the 95% confidence interval included zero ( $B = -.0258$ , 95% biased corrected CI  $[-.267$  to  $.216]$ ,  $p = .839$ ), and the indirect effect of gift-value on feelings of appreciation through perceived generosity did not include zero ( $B = 1.251$ , 95% bias corrected CI  $[.909$  to  $1.633]$ , excluded zero). I conclude that the perceived generosity fully mediated the main effect of gift-value on feelings of appreciation.

**Table 2. Mediation Effect of Thoughtfulness and Generosity using a Set of Regression**

Mediation Model	Variable	Intercept	Gift Value (X)	Perceived Thoughtfulness (ME)
(1)	Feelings of Appreciation (Y)	5.084*** (.14)	1.225*** (.20)	
(2)	Perceived Thoughtfulness (ME)	4.438*** (.17)	1.506*** (.24)	
(3)	Feelings of Appreciation (Y)	2.143*** (.18)	.227 (.13)	.663*** (.04)
Mediation Model	Variable	Intercept	Gift Value (X)	Perceived Generosity (ME)
(1)	Feelings of Appreciation (Y)	5.084*** (.14)	1.225*** (.20)	
(2)	Perceived Generosity (ME)	4.519*** (.14)	1.485*** (.19)	
(3)	Feelings of Appreciation (Y)	1.278*** (.21)	-.026 (.13)	.842*** (.05)

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

### 4.2.5 Gift Value, Power, Thoughtfulness, and Appreciation

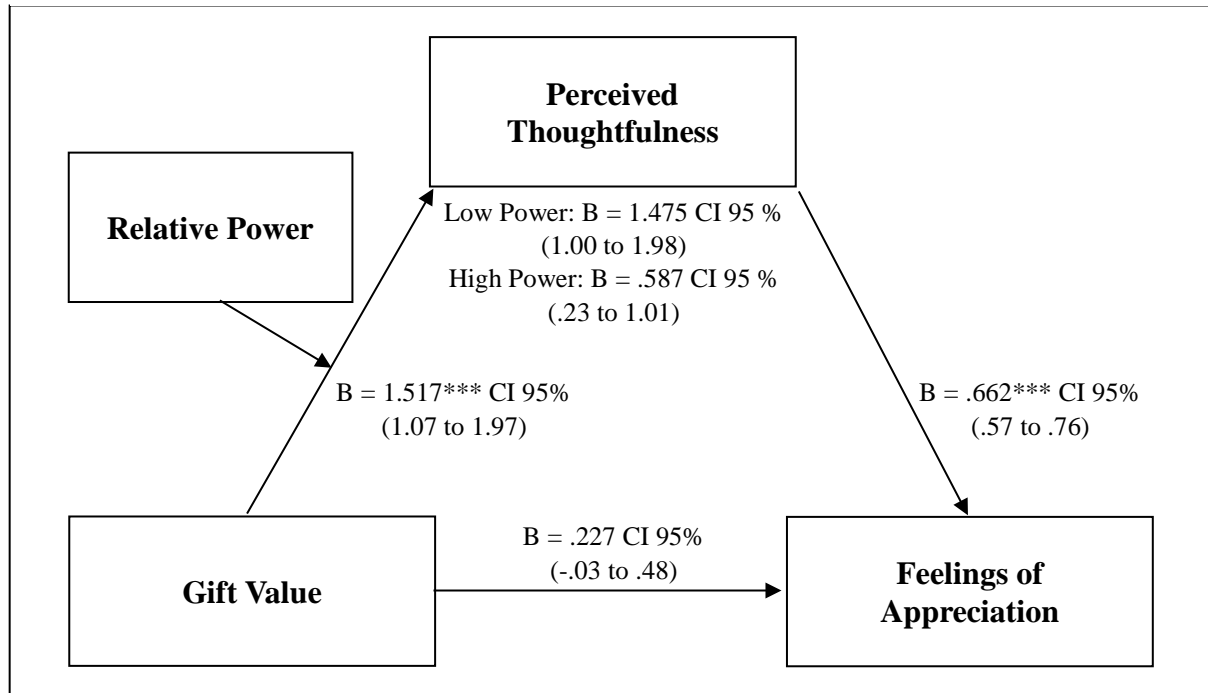
In order to test moderated mediation effect, I used the PROCESS Model 7 (Hayes 2013). I conducted a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 bootstrap samples, with gift-value as the independent variable, relative power as the moderating variable, perceived thoughtfulness as the mediating variable, and feelings of appreciation as the dependent variable.

First, as shown in Fig.3, gift value did not predicted feelings of appreciation at significant level (path a:  $B = .227$ , 95% bias corrected CI [-.03 to .48],  $p = .083$ ). This implies that no significant main effect remains when the mediator (i.e., perceived thoughtfulness) and the moderator (i.e., relative power) are included in the model. Next, when gift value is placed as an independent variable, perceived thoughtfulness as a dependent variable and relative power as a moderator, the gift value predicted perceived thoughtfulness at significant level (path b:  $B = 1.517$ , 95% bias corrected CI [1.07 to 1.97],  $p < .001$ ). Then, perceived thoughtfulness as an independent variable and feelings of appreciation as a dependent variable indicates that perceived thoughtfulness predicted feelings of appreciation at significant level (path c:  $B = .662$ , 95% bias corrected CI [.57 to .76],  $p < .001$ ).

Further, the conditional indirect effect of gift value on feelings of appreciation through perceived thoughtfulness shows that the effects were statistically significant under both low and high power condition, but the coefficient value of low power condition ( $B = 1.475$ , 95% bias corrected CI [1.00 to 1.98] excluded zero) was larger than high power condition ( $B = .587$ , 95% bias corrected CI [.23 to 1.01] excluded zero). In other words, the results show that gift-recipient with relatively low power has greater variance in perceived thoughtfulness (see table 3). Lastly, 95% confidence interval of the index of moderated mediation also excluded zero (95% bias corrected CI [-1.50 to -.31]), concluding the effect of interplay between gift value and relative power on feelings of appreciation was mediated by

perceived thoughtfulness.

**Figure 3. The Moderated Mediation Effect (Thoughtfulness)**



\*  $p < .05$   
\*\*  $p < .01$   
\*\*\*  $p < .001$

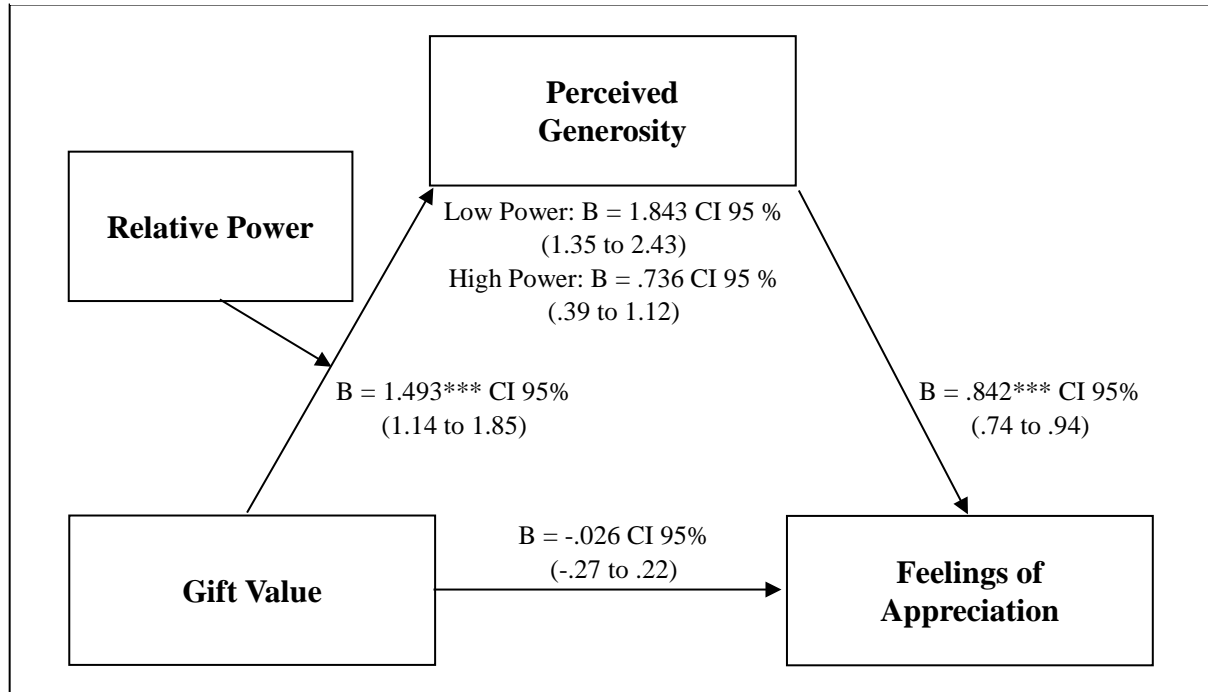
## 4.2.6 Gift Value, Power, Generosity, and Appreciation

In order to test moderated mediation effect, I used the PROCESS Model 7 (Hayes 2013). I conducted a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 bootstrap samples, with gift-value as the independent variable, relative power as the moderating variable, perceived generosity as the mediating variable, and feelings of appreciation as the dependent variable.

First, as shown in Fig.4, gift value did not predicted feelings of appreciation at significant level (path d:  $B = -.026$ , 95% bias corrected CI  $[-.27 \text{ to } .22]$ ,  $p = .833$ ). This implies that no significant main effect remains when the mediator (i.e., perceived generosity) and the moderator (i.e., relative power) are included in the model. Next, when gift value is placed as an independent variable, perceived generosity as a dependent variable and relative power as a moderator, the gift value predicted perceived generosity at significant level (path e:  $B = 1.493$ , 95% bias corrected CI  $[1.13 \text{ to } 1.85]$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Then, perceived generosity as an independent variable and feelings of appreciation as a dependent variable indicates that perceived generosity predicted feelings of appreciation at significant level (path f:  $B = .842$ , 95% bias corrected CI  $[.74 \text{ to } .94]$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Further, the conditional indirect effect of gift value on feelings of appreciation through perceived generosity shows that the effects were statistically significant under both low and high power condition, but the coefficient value of low power condition ( $B = 1.843$ , 95% bias corrected CI  $[1.35 \text{ to } 2.43]$  excluded zero) was larger than high power condition ( $B = .736$ , 95% bias corrected CI  $[.39 \text{ to } 1.12]$  excluded zero). In other words, the results show that gift-recipient with relatively low power has greater variance in perceived generosity (see table 3). Lastly, 95% confidence interval of the index of moderated mediation also excluded zero (95% bias corrected CI  $[-1.50 \text{ to } -.31]$ ), concluding the effect of interplay between gift value and relative power on feelings of appreciation was mediated by perceived generosity.

**Figure 4. The Moderated Mediation Effect (Generosity)**



\*  $p < .05$   
 \*\*  $p < .01$   
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 3. Moderated Mediation Effect using PROCESS SPSS Macro**

MODEL 7							
	Condition	Path	Coefficient	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Direct Effect		$X \rightarrow Y$	.227 (.13)	1.743	.831	-.030	.484
Conditional Indirect Effect	Low Power (MO = 0)	$X \rightarrow ME1 \rightarrow Y$	1.475 <sup>a</sup> (.25)			1.004	1.985
	High Power (MO = 1)	$X \rightarrow ME1 \rightarrow Y$	.587 <sup>a</sup> (.20)			.233	1.011
MODEL 7							
	Condition	Path	Coefficient	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Direct Effect		$X \rightarrow Y$	-.026 (.12)	-.211	.833	-.267	.216
Conditional Indirect Effect	Low Power (MO = 0)	$X \rightarrow ME2 \rightarrow Y$	1.843 <sup>a</sup> (.27)			1.350	2.430
	High Power (MO = 1)	$X \rightarrow ME2 \rightarrow Y$	.736 <sup>a</sup> (.19)			.390	1.119

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

a. zero excluded

### 4.2.7 Three Motivations of Gift-Giving

Prior research proposed that gift-giving can be classified into three general (not necessarily mutually exclusive) categories of motivations: self-interest, obligation, and altruism (Rugimbana et al. 2003; Wolfinbarger and Yale 1993). First, gift-giving motivated by self-interest is giving a gift to eventually improve the condition of the giver. For example, some people give gift to establish wealth and status by impressing recipients with the gifts. Second, obligation is giving a gift because it is bound to do (Goodwin et al. 1990; Rugimbana et al. 2003; Wolfinbarger and Yale 1993). For instance, gift-givers may give because (1) they don't want to be guilty, (2) they want to satisfy others' expectation, and (3) they feel to reciprocate about a favor they have received (Wolfinbarger and Yale 1993). Lastly, gift-giving motivated by altruism is voluntary giving a gift that end in itself and does not directed at gain (Leeds 1963).

I utilized the three gift-giving motivations and conducted additional analysis by asking participants what would be the major motivation of gift-giver in the scenario. This analysis would help us to find weather the gift-recipients with different level of power have certain trend on the prediction about the motivation. The response was collected in multiple choice question. Surprisingly, the results corresponded with the previous analysis results (see Table 4). Most of the low power recipients who received \$5 gift card perceived the gift as motivated by obligation (60.9%), while majority of those who received \$50 gift card interpreted the gift as motivated by altruism (57.1%). Since gratitude is “stronger when recipients perceived that the giver sincerely expected little or nothing in return” (Tesser et al. 1968), it matches the previous results that low power recipients feel higher level of appreciation when receiving high value gift than low value gift. On the other hand, majority of gift recipients with high power perceived the gift as motivated by altruism in both \$5



(55.3%) and \$50 gift card conditions (56.5%). Thus, it correspond with the previous results that gift-recipients with high power feels similar level of appreciation about both low and high value gifts. Also, it support the idea that elevated power will encourage abstract thinking because gift-recipients with high power perceived the low value gift as altruism motivated (e.g. celebration).

**Table 4. Predicted Gift-Giving Motivations**

	Low Power Recipient			High Power Recipient		
	Self-interest	Obligation	Altruism	Self-interest	Obligation	Altruism
Low Value	7	25	9	7	14	26
%	(17.0)	(60.9)	(21.9)	(14.8)	(29.7)	(55.3)
High Value	10	8	24	14	6	26
%	(23.8)	(19.0)	(57.1)	(30.4)	(13.0)	(56.5)

## 5. General Discussion

Through an empirical study, I showed that interpersonal power can shapes gift-recipients' feelings of appreciation. An empirical study demonstrate that the feelings of appreciation is likely to increase when individuals receive a higher value gift. Further, this tendency was much more pronounced when the relative power of gift-recipients is lower than gift-givers. Also, the study identified two underlying psychological mechanisms (i.e. perceived thoughtfulness and perceived generosity) that affect the degree of appreciation they feel. This research concludes that individuals with relatively low power are more likely to perceive low value gift as less thoughtful and less generous, thereby attenuate their feelings of appreciation.

The present research examines the role of relative power on the relationship between gift value and feelings of appreciation. Few previous researchers has considered power difference in gift-giving context, and to my knowledge, it is the first empirical test to use perceived generosity as an underlying mechanism between gift and appreciation. Based on everyday observation, we often engage in giving and receiving gifts to people with diverse status, roles, and power. The main question for this research was driven by a mere curiosity whether some individuals become more sensitive to gift value when receiving it from certain person.

*Theoretical and Managerial Contributions.* One theoretical contribution of this research is that I found when and why an individual has different level or appreciation about a gift. There are many different kinds of circumstances that affect people's feelings of appreciation; predictability (Gino and Flynn 2011), core attributes (Baskin et al. 2014; Cavanaugh et al. 2015), or identity congruency (Aknin and Human 2015; Paolacci et al.

2015) are possible stimulant to vary the feelings of appreciation. However, in this research, I suggest that how thoughtful and generous people perceive about the gift are also an important criteria of appreciation. In fact, these tendencies were more prominent when gift-recipients have relatively lower power than gift-givers.

Further, the current research expands the gift-giving literature by proposing some conditions when the results are different from our original understanding about gift price. To be specific, Flynn and Adams (2009) argued that gift-recipients show no difference in their appreciation about expensive and inexpensive gifts. However, based on the current research, that might not be true all the time. When the relative power of gift-recipients decreases, the value of gifts might become an important cue to judge its thoughtfulness and generosity, affecting the overall degree of appreciation they feel.

*Future Research and Limitations.* There can be additional boundary conditions to be examined. For example, the current research used the scenario of business context, but further studies can be designed to test the influence of power in different context. Concretely, gift exchange between professor and student or parents and children can also be investigated. Those settings may bring a different results. Also, I used gift card as a gift in the scenario, but different types of gift should be tested in future research. Across gift type, for example, whether it is a material good or an experiential good, the effect can be strengthened or attenuated.

Moreover, future research can be designed to check the online gift-giving behavior. In South Korea, giving and receiving gift certificates through mobile phone is very popular. They can send variety of gifts from a cup of Starbucks Americano to Ray Ban sunglasses. Since online environment is very different from offline, the tendency to select and evaluate gift may be different online. For example, gift-recipients may prefer gifts with many offline

stores available because they have to go to the stores to use the gift certificate they had received through mobile phone.

Since this research is not free from limitations, further research could consider and overcome limitations mentioned in the following. Above all, this research was not conducted in real gift-giving situation. Instead, I used a scenario to manipulate power conditions and depict a gift through descriptions and photographs. However, the evaluation of a gift cannot be done only by imagination. For instance, people interpret gift by actually touching and using it and they can also consider others' responds and opinions about the gift. Therefore, the results of this research may not fully reflect the real gift-giving situation.

Further, I used Amazon gift card as a gift. Even though gift card has been widely popularized and many people now want it as a gift, it is still a new type of gift. For the reason, some of the participants may not have enough understanding about gift card. Thus, the individuals' knowledge about gift cards may affect their evaluation. Also, the monetary value of gift card is easy to notice because it is written on the card. However, we often receive gifts that we can't easily predict the price value. Therefore, the representativeness of gift card as gift may be weak and other types of gifts are need to be tested in the future.

Another limitation of this research is that the data is based on participants recruited from Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk (M-Turk) in exchange for a small payment. Although the popularity of this new platform is growing among researchers, there still are doubts about data gathered from M-Turk for its lack of credibility. Also, there is a possibility of demand effects because workers have many experiences participating on numerous studies. Moreover, the participation rate and quality of data can also be affected by compensation rate and task length (Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling 2011). Thus, the reliability of the data should be reconsidered. If adequate time and monetary resources are allowed, participants could be

recruited offline, and the stimuli could be presented in actual business environment and their reaction about gifts can be observed through actual behaviors of the participants.

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# Appendix 1

## Stimuli Used in Empirical Study

### A. Birthday Gift at Work

#### A-1. Scenario: Low Power [High Power] \* Low Value [High Power]

Instruction: Please try to put yourself in the situation below and imagine how you would respond.



You have been working in a company for 6 years and have become fairly well acquainted with your coworkers. You wake up one morning and realize that today is your birthday. When you arrive at work, your *boss* [*subordinate*] comes up to you and gives you a gift with friendly congratulations. When you unwrap it, you discover a \$5 [\$50] Amazon gift card.

#### A-2. Birthday Gift: Low Value [High Value]

Instruction: Please indicate your opinion about a \$5 [\$50] Amazon gift card as a birthday gift.

Image 1. Low Value Gift



Image 2. High Value Gift



## 국 문 초 록

### 선물 주는 사람과 받는 사람 상호간의 힘의 차이가 선물 받는 사람이 느끼는 감사함에 미치는 영향

선물 증여 행위(gift-giving)는 우리의 일상 속에서 가장 흔히 일어나는 교환형태 중 하나이다. 때문에 선물과 관련된 많은 연구가 진행되었는데, 최근에는 선물을 주는 사람과 받는 사람간에 존재하는 비대칭적인 인식에 대한 연구가 많이 이루어졌다. 선행연구들에 따르면 선물을 주는 사람과 받는 사람은 선물의 가격, 의미, 특성 등에 대해서 상반된 관점을 가지고 있다. 하지만 위 연구들은 선물을 주는 사람과 받는 사람의 관계를 동등하고 평행한 것으로 가정하였고, 그들이 가지는 상대적 힘의 차이를 고려하지 않았다. 하지만 사람간의 힘(power)의 차이는 그들의 인식과 행동에 영향을 미칠 수 있으므로, 본 연구는 선물 받는 사람이 느끼는 감사함(feelings of appreciation)의 정도가 선물 주는 사람에 대해서 선물 받는 사람이 가지는 상대적인 힘에 따라 변할 것이라고 예상했다. 실증연구의 결과에 따르면, 선물 받는 사람의 힘이 상대적으로 낮은 경우에는 선물가격에 더 민감하게 반응했다. 왜냐하면 낮아진 힘이 선물의 부차적이고 목표관련성이 적은 특징(예: 선물의 가격)에 더 집중하여 선물을 해석하도록 하기 때문이다 (구체적 사고). 반면에 선물 받는 사람의 힘이 상대적으로 클 경우에는 선물가격에 덜 민감하게 반응했다. 왜냐하면 높아진 힘이 선물의 중심적이고 목표관련성이 높은 특징(예: 선물의 의미)에 더 집중하여 선물을 해석하도록 하기 때문이다 (추상적 사고). 더 나아가, 본 연구는 선물 받는 사람이 선물을 얼마나 사려 깊고(thoughtful) 너그럽다(generous)고 인식하는지가 그들이 느끼는 감사함에 중요한 단서가 될 수 있음을 보여주었다. 특히 그러한 경향은 선물 받는 사람의 힘이 상대적으로 낮을 때 더욱 두드러지게 나타났다.

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**주요어:** 선물, 선물 증여 행위, 선물평가, 감사함, 상대적 힘, 해석 수준 이론, 사려 깊음, 너그러움

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